



5-92

Zero Beat

May 1992

Hampden County Radio Association, Inc

Springfield, Mass

Our 45th ARRL Affiliated Year

Next Meeting:

Friday May 1, 1992

**Bill Shaheen N1CQ
speaking on TOWERS**

**Feeding Hills Congregational Church
Feeding Hills, Mass**

Doors open at 7:30 PM, Meeting starts at 8

ANNUAL CLUB BANQUET

**Friday June 5th
at the "Wherehouse" in Holyoke**

Same location as last year

**See any Board member or
club officer for tickets**

**You do not have to eat to attend the club
annual meeting. You may vote via
absentee ballot or assign a proxy vote
to someone else. These must be signed
to be valid!**

FLEA MARKET

**HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION
SUNDAY APRIL 26**

**Southwick Recreational Center
Southwick MASS**

**Doors open for general admission at 9 am
Sellers only at 7 am**

**Exam registration 9-9:30 am
Exam space is limited, first come, first served
VE sessions start at 10 am**

**Tables: in Advance: \$7.00
At the door, if available: \$10.00**

General admission: \$2.00

**For more information :
KA1TBS Fred Gore 569-3579
K1H Charlie Dunlap 569-5988**

**Editor's Note: I'm having major hassles with my printer this month.
I use a Deskwriter by HP with a Macintosh Classic II. Anyone who knows why this thing
keeps crashing let me know.**

Before the Days of Written Tests Hams Grilled at the Brooklyn Navy Yard

By
Albert E. Sonn W2GC

Few probably remember when you had to take your test at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. There were no written questions and You did not have to send any code if I remember correctly.

In 1912 we had to get a license or get off the air. Oh yes, there were plenty of wireless bootleggers who got by for a few years before they were caught or forced to take a test. But the honest amateur did have a go at it. And he had to know something practical about wireless.

I had been on the air for years before that in 1907 when we made out our call letters to suit ourselves. Mine at first were AS, after my name, later I changed it to DV, because about six other hams in and around Newark, NJ used the letter "D" as a sort of wireless society. We had 2DG, 2DH, 2DI, etc. That was the day we told the commercial stations and the Navy where to go if we saw fit to jam the air. There were no laws to govern us.

We simply ruled the airwaves, so to speak. I remember getting in wrong with the station on Fire Island. The officer there wrote my father a nasty letter so that I would let up on the amateur trash so that Fire Island could get its' traffic through. Station WA at the Waldorf Astoria in New York was so sore about the hams in Jersey killing their traffic with WD at Wilmington, that I, for One, called Pickeril at the key and said "I'll stay off the air for you if you promise to let me have a pair of earphones like he is using!". He said he'd gladly do anything to please me if I would keep that nasty spark gap still. So the next afternoon I left Stevens Prep at Hoboken, took the ferry across the Hudson, and went to see the "Big Chief". When he saw me he was busy handling traffic and did not pay attention to me for about ten minutes. I was fascinated at the way he handled traffic without the usual QRM from our gang. Finally he looked around and asked, "Well, have you made up your mind, do you want to become an operator?" I said I wanted more than that, I was 2DV, the squirt that he complained was jamming him. "Oh, you're the kid who wants a pair of earphones." At that he took the set off his own bald head and handed them to me. I told him I'd be a good boy from now on and I never did bother him again. I was proud to wear those earphones and all the D's looked at me with envy, because I had something they'd never get.

After that licensing came along. I was requested to go over to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and take a test. I did not know what I was in for, but I got up the courage to make the trip. I was ushered into the big station at NAH. Boy, the stuff

they had there! Then a Navy man in charge came in and asked me about how long I'd been operating wireless, and I told him about my hamming experiences and how I wanted to be on the good side of everyone in wireless. Then he took me to a small side room filled with dismantled gear and said, "If you know so much about operating, get this fixed up to go on the air!" Scratching my then thick brown hair, I was flabbergasted at what to do next. I saw some bare wires that were not connected together so I connected those. I called the officer who was really the operator of NAH. He said, "All right Sonny, you think you got it going and it won't blow any fuses?" All I could say was go ahead and close the circuit. To this day I can not say what I did, but it must have been something right. The generator whirled and the meters showed progress. I stood back, "Press the key", the officer said. I did and there was a loud spark between the electrodes in the gap. I never heard anything so loud. There was ozone all over the small room. I had made it work. The officer turned to me and said, "You'll do, Sonny, many flunk that kind of a test. How did you learn all of that stuff?" I told him I replaced the batteries for our doorbell and had been an amateur setting up my own station without help.

My license came in a few days and I had to change my call from DV to 2GC. I was the envy of all the young men who were still in the predawn licensing area.

Well, I am W2GC since 1912 and kept the call going ever since. If you don't believe me, just look in the 1912 call letter book and you'll see 2GC among the earliest records. Reprinted from Spark Gap Times April 1966

Letters

Dear Editor,

I just wanted to let you know that as a history buff I thoroughly enjoy your historical flights of fancy into the past of HCRA and amateur radio in general.

I don't give a hoot in Harlem what others say or think. I think its' neat, keep it up.

Very Truly yours,
Howard Pomeroy
KA1ZCY

Thanks for the letter, Howard. I like the history articles too. If you don't know where you've been, you can't plan the future. The traditions of the Hampden County Radio Association provide a continuity to the past founding members of the club. The newer hams have no idea what the club is all about, I know this from listening to comments on the local repeaters.

Howard, I'm a real history nut, especially about the American Civil War. Did you know I dress up as a Union soldier, complete with a Springfield rifle and bayonet to reenact battles? 73, Jeff K1BE

Apology

Bob Brough sent an ad in for Zero Beat. I have lost it and I'm sorry Bob
73, Jeff K1BE

Quarter Century Wireless Association

By Tom Shea W1HYO

Well, I now realize I'm eligible for membership in the QCWA, or Quarter Century Wireless Association, and so are you if you have been licensed for 25 years or more. You are also able to join if you can prove you had a license 25 years ago, it does not have to be 25 continuous years! Milt Chaffee, W1EFW, told me that all W1 and K1 calls are eligible and many other callsigns in our area.

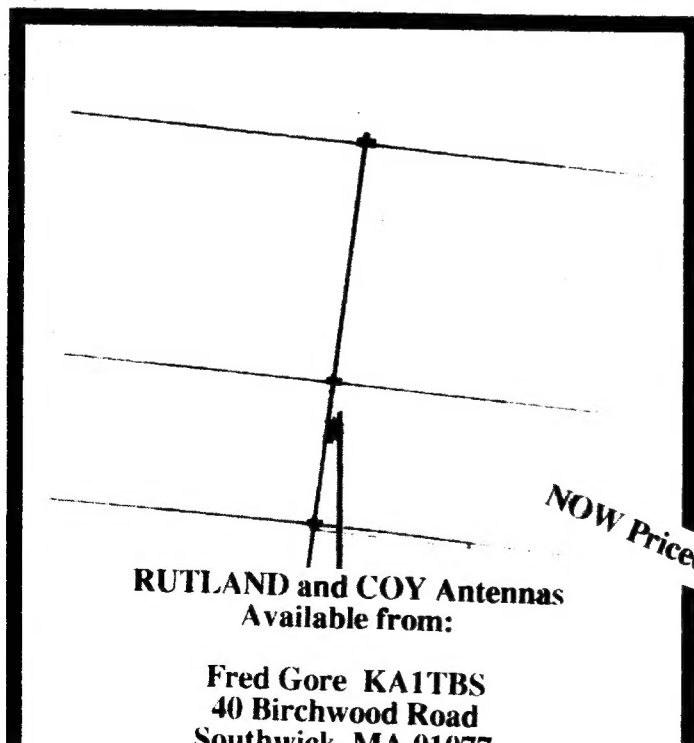
Art Zavarella W1KK has flattered me into volunteering to help setup a chapter in Western Mass of the QCWA. My early memories of the QCWA gang when I first got into amateur radio are that they sat around and discussed spark gaps, zeppelin antennas, boric acid batteries, leyden jar condensers, squirrel cages, cat whisker's, etc.. Now I guess they talk about AM, beams, antenna farms, and other interesting things. And a little socializing too!

We are interested in setting up this Western Mass chapter and want you as one of the charter members. We need your input to help set it up and to make intelligent decisions regarding dues, meeting places, times, officers, etc., etc. Please join us.

Contact me or Art by any method possible, preferably seeing us at the May HCRA meeting, or landline me at 733-1543, and let us know you're interested.

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SHF 2401K	2400 MHz Mode S rcv Conv		Kit \$155	Built \$255
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3335 PA	14W in 40W out	902-928 MHz	\$335
1302 PA	10mW in 3.0W out	2304 MHz	\$400
901 IPA	10mW in 1W out	3456 MHz	Write or Call

T/R Switching available, all 13.8 VDC

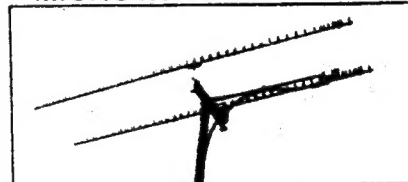
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2355LYK	55el Superloop Kit	1296 MHz	22 dBi	\$108.00
1345LYK	45el loop Yagi Kit	2304 MHz	21 dBi	\$ 79.00
945LYK	45el loop Yagi Kit	3456 MHz	21 dBi	\$ 79.00

Other models available. Call or write for catalog.

DOWN EAST MICROWAVE

Bill Olson, W3HOT

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FAX: (207) 948-5157

1991 CLUB OFFICERS 1992

President: NQ1C Bob Lafleur
Vice-president: N1EPE Larry Lemoine
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Secretary: N1DUY Jim Sebolt



Next Board of Director's Meeting:
Thursday May 7th 7:30 pm
NQ1C's QTH in Springfield

Next Meeting
Friday May 1, 1992
Feeding Hills Congregational Church

Bill Shaheen N1CQ
speaking on TOWERS

Hampden County Radio Association, Inc.
P O Box 482
West Springfield MA 01090-0482



Forwarding & Address
Correction Requested

First Class

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